The Church in Story and Pageant

The Old Glebe House at Woodbury and Its Historic Background

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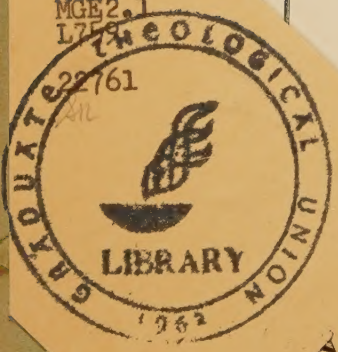

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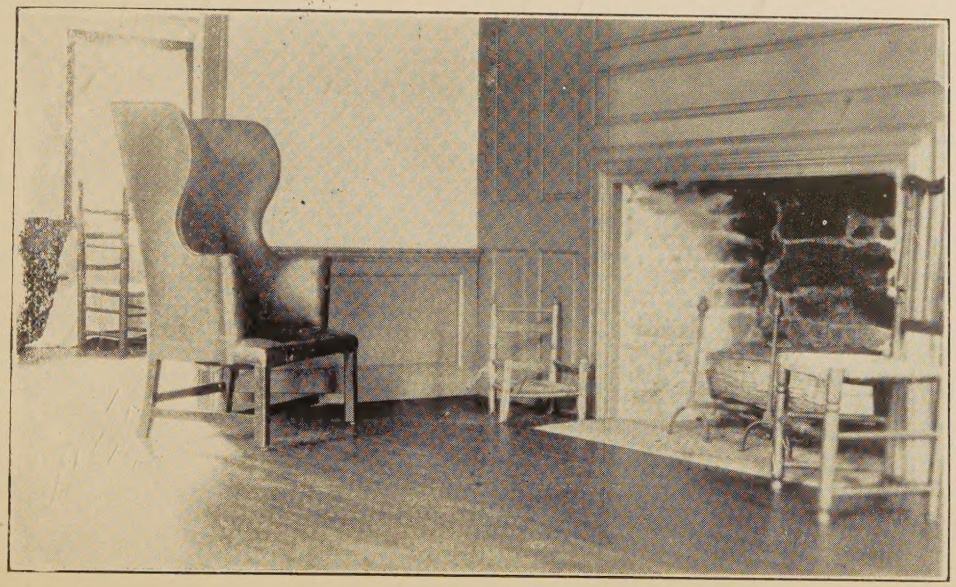


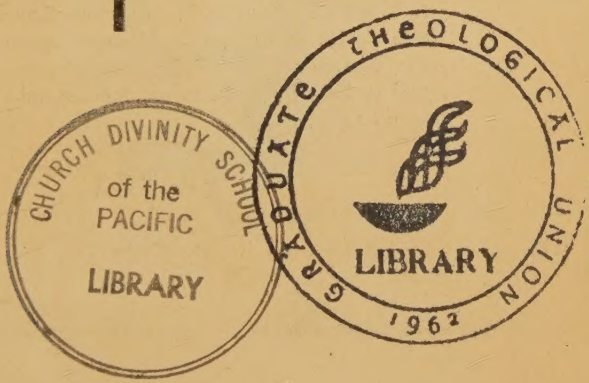
Fireplace in Room where Election Occurred

The Old Glebe House at Woodbury and Its Historic Background

By

REV. GEORGE T. LINSLEY

WITH INTRODUCTION BY HELEN L. LINSLEY



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The Editors of the Church Missions Publishing Company acknowledge their indebtedness to the Committee on Old Houses of the Colonial Dames of America for their courtesy in permitting the publication in this form of the following article. The paper was originally prepared at the Committee's request to be added to its files in the Connecticut State Library. They also desire to express their appreciation of the courtesy of the *Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities* and to the *Hartford Courant* for the use of several of the cuts used as illustrations.

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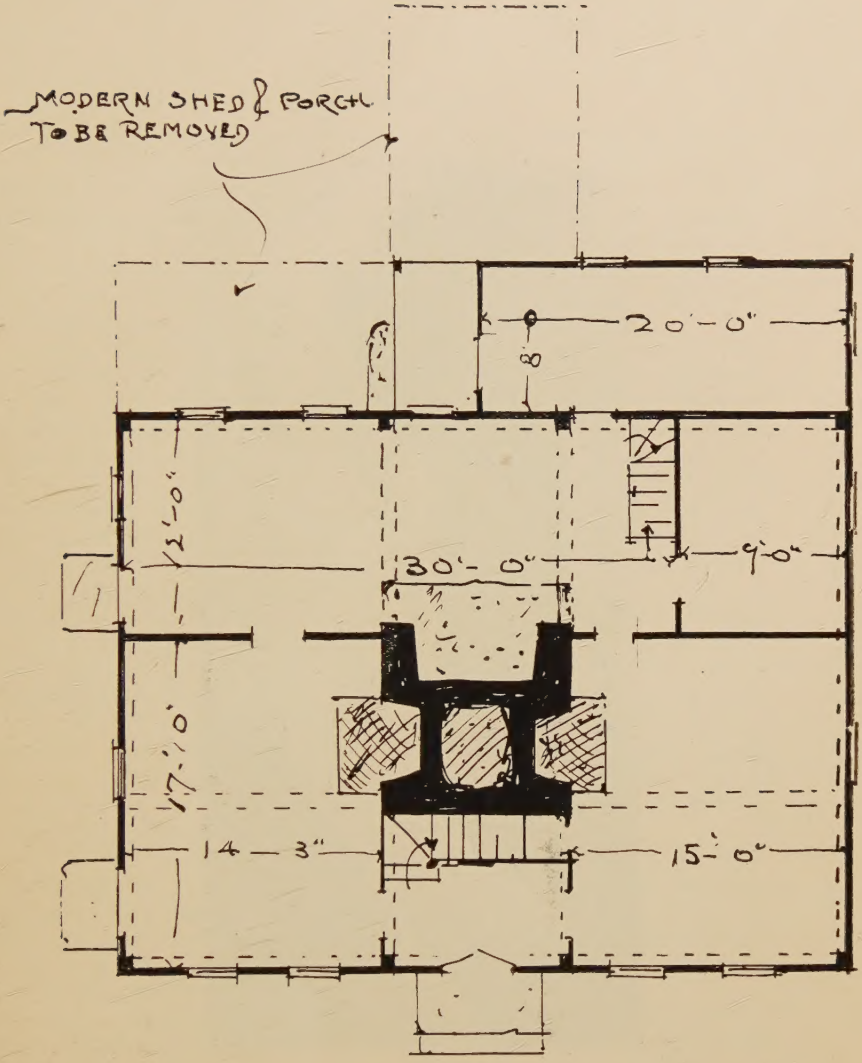
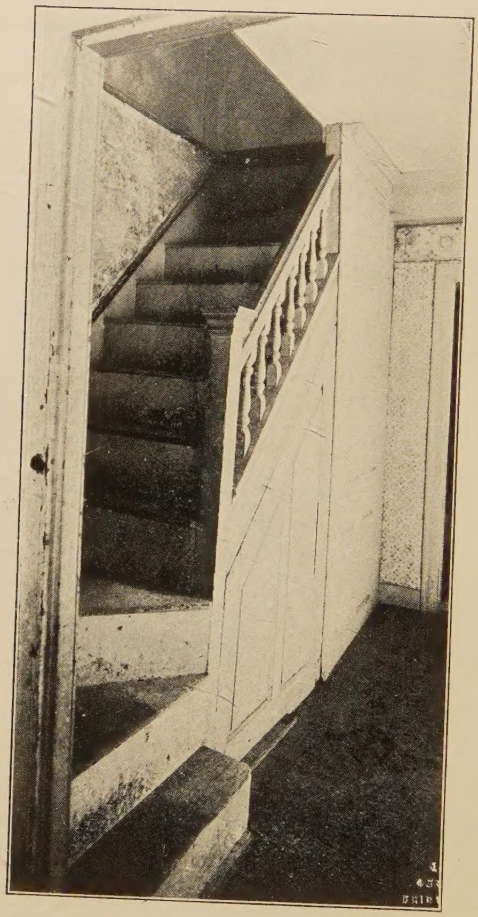


THE GLEBE HOUSE.
WOODBURY CONN.

The election of Samuel Seabury must have taken place in the parlor to the left of the porch.

In the hall or room on the right the opening on the left side of the fireplace shows the spot where the sliding panel in the wall gives access to the secret stairs under the front stairway.



THE "PORCH"

Or front entry, showing ancient Staircase, under which—from the living room or "Hall" entered through the doorway on the right—are the secret stairs into the cellar, concealed by the sliding panel.

INTRODUCTION

The Old Glebe House in Woodbury has for years past been the property of the Diocese of Connecticut. During these years committees have been appointed and from time to time attempts have been made to use it for philanthropic or historical purposes, but all such efforts have been unsuccessful. In November, 1922, however, Bishop Acheson appointed a new committee whose duty it should be to make one more attempt to save this interesting house from the decay or destruction which has, alas, swept away so many of the old colonial landmarks of New England.

Since this revival of interest, architects have carefully examined the the building and decided that it shows two distinct periods of construction. In their opinion it was originally built as a one room house about the latter half of the seventeenth century. The porch and chimney, together with the upper and lower rooms at their left, seem to have been the original part. About 1750 the other two rooms at the right of the chimney were added together with the large kitchen which extends across the back. The whole was then roofed over making the one typically colonial house that we see today. The chimney is of cobble stones and uncapped—the roof gambrel in front sloping in a gambrel curve at the back over the lean-to kitchen. A second lean-to and shed are now at the back of the house which are evidently a very late addition. The usual clump of old lilacs clusters about one corner while fine trees cast their shade over the roof. Within, much of the original panelling may still be seen and much that is very good, particularly in the lower room at the left of the porch where the election of Samuel Seabury occurred. In a closet under the stairs is still found the sliding panel through which it is said that the royalist rector, the Rev. John Rutgers Marshall, who resided in the house at the time of the Revolution, used to slip into the cellar when surprised by his Whig enemies.

Such, then, are the architecture and the material history of the Glebe House, and these alone make it interesting enough to be preserved, but when we add to these features all the brave and stirring events which have taken place here and realize the fulness and potency of the historic years which led up to these events, the old house puts on a new glory. But all this is vividly told in the accompanying article.

It is gratifying to feel that a vigorous and able committee is now at work on the problem of restoration before it is too late, and every member is determined that this final effort shall be crowned with success. At the time of this writing the work is only in its beginning, but three meetings having been held by the committee. Enough money is to be raised to put the property in complete repair and also to establish a fund, the income of which shall be used for maintenance. It is then proposed to refurnish the interior so far as possible and throw it open to visitors as one of the most interesting show houses in Connecticut.

HELEN L. LINSLEY

Preface to the Second Edition

Since the writing of the "Introduction" to the first edition of this pamphlet, the work of the Glebe House Committee, which was then in its infancy, has reached a most happy fruition and the early dreams of its members have been fully realized. For nearly three years the work went on. Nine meetings were held and more than twelve thousand dollars raised. Mr. Thomas Nash, the well known architect of New York, was given charge of the restoration and under his wise direction the house has been put into excellent condition, restored and furnished in such a manner that the old atmosphere and, we believe, that much of the old appearance is preserved. There is reason for great gratitude that Mr. Nash was able to complete this work before his untimely and sudden death in New York last year.

On June 30, 1925 the house was formally opened and dedicated with impressive ceremony in the presence of a large throng of visitors. Since that time the resident caretaker reports that many hundreds of interested persons have visited it.

The Committee on Restoration having completed its work dissolved in July, 1925. A new society was then formed which is called the "Seabury Society for the Preservation of the Glebe House" and to this organization, through its annually increasing membership of various sorts, we look in the future for the preservation of one of the most interesting landmarks in all New England.

H. L. L.

Hartford, September, 1926.

THE OLD GLEBE HOUSE

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"The usual clump of lilacs clusters about one corner."

THE GLEBE HOUSE IN WOODBURY, CONNECTICUT

The old house and its glebe lands were sold in 1786 for the benefit of the struggling parish. The house passed in turn into the ownership of several families, before it was bought back and restored to the custody of the Diocese of Connecticut to be preserved as an historical monument.

St. Paul's Church and Main Street of old Woodbury, Connecticut.

The Old Glebe House

An old house may be of interest for a variety of reasons. It may be a matter of mere age or as a type of a period viewed from an architectural standpoint or, again, in details of construction. But much of interest, both historical and sentimental, must be added when such a building has special associations with human personalities. Estimating a building in relation to persons whose memory is cherished in a particular family or to individuals of note in the larger sphere of the state or of the world or even in relation to some great institution or to some noble cause leads us up in the ascending scale of increasing appreciation.

We have Philadelphia and its Independence Hall with the patriotic associations with Continental Congress and the Constitutional Convention, with signing of historic documents which a whole nation has ever since valued and will, we trust, forever cherish. We have Boston and her Old State House and Faneuil Hall sacredly associated with the cause of liberty and independence so dear to men in every land and every age. But too long has it been forgotten that there is still standing, in an obscure and practically unknown town in a hidden New England valley, a building which, in the estimation of the members of a leading Christian Communion, may justly claim associations, historical and sentimental, with a cause greater than that of independence, greater than that of liberty, with an institution greater than that of any nation, and with an office higher than that of the commander-in-chief of any army or the chief magistrate in any land, be he president or king or emperor.

That building is the Glebe House; that town is Woodbury, Connecticut; that cause is the eternal Kingdom of the Eternal

God; that institution is the Holy Catholic Church of the Lord Jesus Christ; that office is the office of a Bishop in the Church of God.

Others have written well of this building from the angle of architectural description, and appreciation. It is our purpose to dwell upon the religious associations and their significance. This may be at the risk of the charge of indulging in sentiment. That risk we must run as we make our venture. Charles Kingsley once said:—

> "By sentiment well regulated as by sorrow well used, great nations live, great institutions endure."

I.

Applying this saying of a truly great man to a really great institution such as the Church of Christ it is not too much to say that Woodbury in Connecticut with its Glebe House wherein the first American Bishop was elected by free vote of his assembled brethren and sent abroad to be duly consecrated to the highest office in the Church of God, should rank, in the estimation of religiously minded people, along with Philadelphia and its historic buildings and Boston and its historic halls; and also along with Jamestown in Virginia with its origins both political and religious. It is in Jamestown that the whole nation finds not only its first permanent settlement but its first representative assembly and finds that political origin in the building there erected to the name of the Prince of Peace.

It is in Woodbury and its Glebe House wherein clergymen of the same historic Anglican Communion took that significant action which led directly to the completeness of organization of the Church so vital to its successful continuance. This action led also to the adoption, as we shall see, of a Concordat, a document which may well be cherished, at least by the members of a great Christian Body, alongside of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. If these two last named documents insured the founding and perpetua-

tion of a great Nation the Concordat "established in mutual good faith and confidence," insured to Connecticut and to America for all time the maintenance of the true scriptural, primitive, and historic faith in the Triune God and the valid and truly Catholic celebration and administration of the great sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ. With these and other associations to be pointed out we stand by the Glebe House in Woodbury, and, whatever our religious creed may be, there come to us the thrilling words of England's great moralist and philosopher, Samuel Johnson,—"That man is little to be envied whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plain of Marathon, or whose piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of Iona." Like "fair Iona's bound" we feel that here indeed "'tis holy ground."

II.

The full significance of the election, on March 25, 1783, of Samuel Seabury to be consecrated a Bishop in the Church of God, and the first Bishop of Connecticut and of America, will appear through the consideration of the chief events which led up to that action and of the far reaching consequences which followed from it.

There is an historical background of the whole Colonial Period of nearly one hundred and fifty years from the first settlement of the Colony of Connecticut in 1635 down to the close of the Revolutionary War and the signing of the Treaty of Paris.

(*a*) The early settlers, whether coming directly to Connecticut or indirectly by way of Massachusetts, were of two kinds, Puritans and Separatists. They all came from England and had been brought up in the Mother Church of England, but they all soon ceased to consider themselves members of that Church, having become displeased with many things in the land of their origin.

The union of Church and State was the prevailing theory of the age, in all Europe and in England. It was brought to New England with the first settlers to become the foundation of that type of nonconformity which in Connecticut became Congregationalism, and the Congregational Church became "the established Church" in Connecticut as in the other colonies of New England.

This "Standing Order," as it was called, was practically undisputed until the close of the seventeenth century. It included the propositions (1) that the State's first duty was the maintenance of religion, (2) that there should be enforced taxation for its support, (3) that conformity to a particular mode of worship be imposed and (4) that the supervision and control of the Church be exercised by the State.

This theory of the relations between Church and State could be applied without causing unrest or opposition as long as the early colonists were practically homogenous, and alike in religious convictions.

By the year 1690 there was evidence of a changed condition in the Colony. There were then in the town of Stratford "a considerable number of professors of the faith of the Church of England and desirous to worship God in the Liturgy of their forefathers." Doubtless there were other Churchmen scattered here and there through the different towns of the Colony. We know of at least three or four copies of the Book of Common Prayer which had been brought to Connecticut. Very likely there were more.

One of these belonging to Samuel Smithson of Guilford fell into the hands of a young man named Samuel Johnson at about the time he entered Yale College, and being carefully studied by him led him eventually to accept its teachings. After becoming a Congregational minister he used in public ministrations some of the prayers he had learned in the Prayer Book and won the reputation for being "gifted in prayer." His hearers marveled that he could use such well selected language and such choice

diction. Johnson afterwards became rector of the first parish in Connecticut at Stratford and became, as he has well been called, the "Father of Episcopacy in Connecticut."

Another copy of the Prayer Book is known to have been in a family in Plymouth. The families there were in the habit of meeting with the owners of the Prayer Book and this led to the founding of other parishes in Connecticut, and still others in Pennsylvania, western New York, and Ohio. Bishop Williams, of Connecticut, once said that the Book of Common Prayer was the Church's "first and best missionary."

(b) Through the three score years that had elapsed since the earliest settlement on the "Great River" other influences had been at work silently in the ecclesiastical life of Connecticut. These had to do with the question of Church Polity. Although the people who came here in the early years soon lost all thought of connection with the Church of England there were among their ministers about fifteen men, including Thomas Hooker, the founder of Hartford and author of the first written constitution in history, who had received Episcopal ordination in England. After they came here the people began to ordain their own ministers. As Dr. Samuel Hart well says, "Some of them even believed that they could ordain their own ministers by simply the laying on of hands by the members of the congregation. In Saybrook there were two or three instances where the people insisted on it that they had the right to ordain ministers for themselves. There was a very curious ordination in Milford, where one of the members of the congregation who was to lay on hands was a blacksmith, and he thought because he used leather mittens in his work in the blacksmith shop that the proper thing to do was to put on his leather mittens for the service; it was called the 'leather mitten ordination.' One result of this was that sober minded men and women began to think that perhaps, after all, the Church of England was in the right, that it might be best to follow the example which had been prevailing in the Church for many hundreds of years, that no one

should be considered to have the right to preach the Word of God or minister the sacraments unless he had been ordained by a Bishop."

These were some of the influences at work which set the people to thinking, and sometimes to questioning some features of the regime of the "Standing Order," and stirred up recollections of what had been known in old England. They prepared the way for a decided change in relation to certain religious matters on the part of newly coming English Churchmen and others in sympathy with them when the opportunity should arrive.

That opportunity was presented as a direct and immediate result of the founding in England in 1701 of "The Venerable Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts." At that time there was no clergyman of the Church of England in the colony and no effort had been made by the Church at home to seek out Churchmen "stranded among the Puritan colonists of New England."

(c) In the year 1702, however, a group of Stratford Churchmen petitioned the Society to send them a clergyman. Before the year was out came over from England two missionaries, Rev. George Keith and Rev. John Talbot. They spent a Sunday in New London on a tour of investigation from New Hampshire to North Carolina. They were men of great energy, earnestness, zeal, and "persuasive eloquence." They were received with great courtesy by the people and the Congregational minister, who was afterwards Governor of the Colony, Mr. Gurdon Saltonstall. This visit led to the foundation in 1725 of the Parish in New London, now called St. James's, where in 1732 came to be rector Rev. Samuel Seabury, of Groton, a descendant of John Alden, and a Harvard graduate, ordained in England by the Bishop of London, and the father of the first Bishop of Connecticut.

Meanwhile another stream of influence was gaining headway in the southwestern part of Connecticut. If New London

was the place where clergymen of the Church of England first preached in Connecticut, Stratford is the town where our first Parish was established. This was due to the memorable visit of the Rev. George Muirson under the protection and patronage of Col. Caleb Heathcote. Mr. Muirson preached and baptized in several towns from Greenwich to Stratford, situated along the shore. They were threatened with prison and met hard usage. Their visit was called "an unwelcome intrusion." They arrived in Stratford in 1706, and the first Parish in Connecticut was founded there in 1707.

In this background of history which we are reviewing, perhaps the most memorable year is 1722. That year saw the first settled clergyman of the Church of England in the colony, the Rev. George Pigot of Stratford, and witnessed a remarkable event in our Church history which may be called even startling.

Seven young men of good character, high reputation, and well educated, all Congregational ministers, were in the habit of meeting from time to time for study and discussion of the Prayer Book and other Church Books in the Yale College Library. They have well been called "seekers after the truth in respect to Church order and an Apostolic ministry." Whatever may be thought of the conclusions they arrived at they ought ever to be held in honor in Connecticut as champions of independent thought and men with the courage of their convictions. Their names are: Dr. Timothy Cutler, the President or Rector of Yale; Samuel Johnson, Congregational minister in West Haven; Daniel Browne, of West Haven, a tutor in the College; James Wetmore, minister in North Haven; Jared Eliot, of Killingworth; John Hart, of East Guilford; Samuel Whittlesey, of Wallingford. By reading, study, and discussion, and after earnest consideration, four, at least, of these men, feeling grave doubt whether they ought to minister any longer to their congregations unless they could first be ordained by a Bishop, sent a written communication to the authorities of Yale College and others of "the fathers and brethren," assembled at

the Commencement in 1722, and declared for Episcopacy. This action aroused great excitement, opened much discussion and startled the whole of the religious world of Connecticut. President Woolsey once said that "Greater alarm would scarcely be awakened now if the Theological Faculty of the College were to declare for the Church of Rome, avow their belief in transubstantiation, and pray to the Virgin Mary." That Yale Commencement was called the "Dark Day." A Harvard authority says "This event shook Congregationalism throughout New England like an earthquake, and filled all its friends with terror and apprehension." Another Massachusetts minister in his public prayer referred to "the Connecticut apostacie."

On the other hand, these four men who made this startling declaration had been in communication with the first and then the only settled Episcopal minister in the Colony, Mr. Pigot at Stratford. The latter had probably given them helpful advice, and he, with considerable satisfaction, expressed "his expectations of a glorious revolution of the ecclesiastics of this country."

One immediate result of this movement of 1722 was the decision of Cutler, Johnson, Browne and Wetmore to cross the ocean of 3,000 miles in a sailing vessel to seek ordination in England from the Archbishop of Canterbury or other Bishop of the Church there. This showed much courage, involved serious risk, and meant to them great sacrifice.

Cutler came back to become Rector of Christ Church, Boston; Wetmore to minister in Connecticut for a time and to settle in Rye, N. Y.; Browne died of small-pox in England; and Johnson returned to West Haven, and then went to Stratford where under him the first church building in Connecticut was completed and opened on Christmas Day, 1723. Johnson stayed in Stratford until 1754, when he went to New York to become the first President of King's College, now Columbia University. His work here in this Colony was so important and was performed in so many places far removed from Strat-

ford, including Woodbury, that he is considered to be the founder of the Church here and has been called, as noted before, "The Father of Episcopacy in Connecticut."

Through his influence and that of others associated with him the Episcopal Church came to have an assured place in the Colony; outside feeling of contempt for her gave place to fear, and a new era for the Church had dawned.

During the half century from 1722 to the Revolutionary War forty-three candidates crossed the ocean and six of these lost their lives. The chief dangers besides those of a voyage in a sailing vessel were from the scourge of small-pox, and "the violence of enemies," as England was at war with France; so that some died of the dread disease and others languished in French prisons.

This period was also marked by repeated petitions sent to the mother country for a Bishop to be sent over to the Colonies for the administration of those ordinances which were considered essential to the fulness of the Church's life and so necessary to the welfare of the souls of her members. These included ordination to the ministry, confirmation of baptized members as a rite of apostolic origin, of universal practice in all historic communions and of fundamental importance to the Christian life, and the exercise of chief authority in administration and discipline.

By the impetus of the events in New Haven in 1722 and in following years, within a generation "the Episcopal Church under a native born ministry had penetrated every town, had effected lodgment in every Puritan stronghold, and had drawn into her membership large numbers of sober-minded, self-contained, tenacious people who constitute the membership of New England today." After the conversions at Yale in 1722, the movement for the apostolic episcopate in America became more determined, and never wholly ceased until the consecration of Samuel Seabury as Bishop of Connecticut in 1784.

(*d*) This matter of providing a Bishop for the Colonies had claimed attention before the close of the seventeenth century when Church of England people were appearing in New England in larger numbers. Up to that time all the American Colonies were nominally under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of London. Once there was the plan to consecrate a Suffragan Bishop to the Bishop of London and send him to New York; once the clergy of Maryland were asked by the then Bishop of London to select a fit man and he would consecrate him as Suffragan. Even so early as 1638 Archbishop Laud had a plan to send out a Bishop to New England. Similar plans occupied the attention of several other Bishops and Archbishops from time to time and of at least one Lord Chancellor, especially when dissent was only in the second generation and loyalty to the home government was universal and the idea of ultimate separation from the mother country had not gained much headway.

"From this side of the water, however, the cry for a Bishop was never silent," and the more the Church grew the more imperative became the need. The report of the first S. P. G. missionaries in 1702 included the statement that "the primary need was Bishops." This was followed by letters at intervals to the Society's Secretary to the same effect. Convocations of clergymen in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland and further south formally petitioned the Archbishops, or the Bishops of London; similar petitions were brought to the attention of the Crown, including Queen Anne and George I. Connecticut was by no means behindhand in these expressions.

Samuel Johnson in the years following the memorable 1722, and Samuel Seabury in the years preceding the more memorable 1783, were foremost in outspoken advocacy of an American Episcopate. Petitions without number were presented to the authorities of the English Church and of the English State pleading for a Bishop. They came from eminent laymen and from prominent clergymen; they came from individuals and convocations, and some originated here and some in England.

As Dean Hodges sums up the movement:—

"Sometimes these petitions were declined by reason of indifference or ignorance. Church people in England knew little about this country and many of them cared less. We seemed to them like a poor plantation in the middle of the Soudan. Moreover, the only Bishop who then seemed possible was a dignified person, who resided in a palace, had six horses to his carriage, and was accustomed to the society of courts. . . .

"Sometimes the petitions were declined by reason of the current contentions. The wars of the seventeenth century kept the attention and interest of most men at home; they had no time to mind the colonies. The wars of the eighteenth century fostered the spirit of independence which at last associated itself in the American Revolution; people in this country, at first Puritans, but afterward Churchmen, also, objected to an institution which might hold the colonies more firmly to the English throne. Thus in the seventeenth century, when American Churchmen appealed for a Bishop, they were met by English indifference; and in the eighteenth century when English Churchmen were desirous that a Bishop should be sent to America, they were met by American hostility, and there was no Bishop."

Another authority has said of this movement for a resident American Bishop that it "is the story of the long, wearisome, pitiful, despairing effort to obtain that office without which the Church could not live."

To realize the development of events along this line in all the original Colonies from 1607 onward and especially in Connecticut from the Hartford settlement in 1635 to the Revolutionary War is to prepare oneself to grasp fully the deep significance of the action taken in March, 1783, in the Glebe House in Woodbury, electing Seabury to be consecrated Bishop of "Columbia's Primal See."

(*e*) During that period of a century and a half was steadily going on in Connecticut the process of the development of

religious liberty. The theory of the relation between Church and State prevailing at the beginnings of the Colony in Hartford and New Haven had to give way before the progressive demands of the times. Questions of taxation, of franchise, of Church control, of State maintenance, of civil freedom, of religious liberty were all bound up together, and vitally affected the daily life of the people. The domination of the "Standing Order" encroached upon such sacred principles as that of "no taxation without representation" and that of "freedom to worship God." In defense of both these principles is the notable instance of Godfrey Malbone building a church upon his farm in the town of Pomfret, now Brooklyn, to escape compulsory taxation for the salary of the Congregational minister, and to worship according to the faith and liturgy of the Church of England. Gradually the strictness and severity of the early laws gave way to the broader views both within and without the limits of the prevailing Congregational regime.

The Cambridge Platform of 1648 followed by the Half-Way Covenant were the first liberalizing enactments within. These were followed by the Saybrook Platform and the Toleration Act of 1708. Indirectly the latter affected "dissent" outside, but it was not until 1727 that the "First great victory for Dissent" was won. Under the lead of Fairfield Churchmen the Assembly was influenced to pass the law exempting members of the Church of England from paying any taxes "for the building of meeting houses for the present established Churches of this government" and permitting them to pay their money for the support of their own churches. As the Episcopalians had been foremost among the dissenters pressing for greater liberty, especially for exemption from taxes for the benefit of Congregational worship, so they were the first to profit by the liberalizing law of 1727.

The disturbing events of 1722 at Yale were not forgotten. Churchmen had long been subjected to the milder forms of persecution such as that of tongue and pen or of social ostracism,

but after 1708 fines and imprisonments began in earnest and continued for many years. Some of the petty offences were "reading the Prayer Book" or "absence from public worship," though Churchmen met in private houses and worshipped in their own way.

The legal action granting more liberty to outside "Dissent" was gradually applied to others, and it has well been summarized in the statement that "Episcopalian, Quaker and Baptist had driven the thin edge of a destroying wedge into the foundations of the Connecticut Establishment."

This work went on through the liberalizing laws of 1770, through the granting of further exemptions to "Separatists" by the revision of the laws in 1750 and in 1784, but the establishment of religious liberty was not complete until the "truly liberal Charter" was superseded by the new Constitution of 1818.

(*f*) One other influence deeply affecting the Episcopalians in Connecticut in the eighteenth century must be referred to here. It is the great revival or, as it has been known in history, the "Great Awakening" of 1740-1742. This time of religious excitement is traced first to Jonathan Edwards in Northampton a few years before. That spread into the other Colonies but it then subsided and was followed by a period of religious indifference. Then came this "spiritual cyclone" far beyond all precedent. "A religious furor, almost mania, spread through New England."

Bishop Lines has said of this movement: "It is associated with the name of George Whitefield. There was extravagance and excitement almost beyond belief. It was the reaction from the spiritual deadness of sixty years. The Puritan churches were thrown into controversy and discord. The old conservative people tried vainly to withstand the new enthusiasm. The 'old lights' disliked the 'new lights' more than they disliked the Episcopal Church, which is saying a good deal. . . . The wild extravagance of some of these traveling preachers, going

up and down telling the clergy that they had never been converted and that they were leading their congregations straight down to hell, and the outcries and bodily manifestations, as the result of the new preaching, were almost incredible. Meanwhile the Church went on her way quietly, unmoved by the excitement. She became the refuge for those who were wearied by the religious turmoil and controversy. It must have been a blessed thing in New England between 1740 and 1750 that there was in the Episcopal Church a place where the Gospel was simply preached and the Christian life nourished. . . During these years of turmoil and confusion the Episcopal Church gained greatly and took a position which would have been commanding, but for the ruin which came with the war of Independence. The Church was commending herself more and more to Connecticut people. Connecticut clergy understood their own people and were gaining a larger hearing."

(*g*) When the War of the Revolution broke out in 1775 there were twenty Church of England clergymen in Connecticut. They had all taken the oath of allegiance to the mother country at the time of their ordination and most of them were naturally loyalists and it was no easy thing for any of them to change hastily their patriotic devotion to the Crown, while keeping their religoious devotion to the Church of England. Nearly all of them were subjected to indignities and hatreds and personal violence. Hard trials also befell the members of the Church in general. Perhaps the only place where the Church services were maintained without interruption throughout the War was by Rev. John Beach in Newtown about twelve miles west of Woodbury. He prayed for the king in public until his death in 1782. He was once shot at in Redding while preaching. He paused in his sermon and said, "Fear not them who can kill the body, but rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell." The bullet lodged in the sounding board and is now preserved in a memorial tablet. A like spirit was shown by

others of his clerical brethren including Rev. John Rutgers Marshall of Woodbury.

At the close of the War the Church lay prostrate and the outlook was dubious indeed.

(*h*) Thus in the background of Connecticut religious history preceding the publication of the Treaty of Peace can be easily discovered three great impulses towards Episcopacy. Three corresponding streams of influence can be traced until they converge in a remarkable way in Woodbury in 1783.

The first visitation of S. P. G. missionaries to New London in 1702 led to the founding of the mother parish of Eastern Connecticut in 1725, where the Rev. Samuel Seabury was rector from 1732 to 1743. He was the father of the first bishop-elect chosen in Woodbury.

From Trinity Church, New York, and its daughter parish in Rye came other early missionaries whose mininstrations led directly to the founding of Connecticut's first parish in 1707 in Stratford, the mother parish of Western Connecticut, from which sprang the Woodbury parish in 1740, where services had been held as early as 1723. In 1771 the Rev. John Rutgers Marshall began his ministry there, having been "licensed and authorized" by the Bishop of London "to perform the office of a minister or priest at Woodbury, or elsewhere within the province of Connecticut in North America." Marshall had studied divinity under Dr. Johnson, of Stratford, and "was the last but one of those candidates who went from Connecticut on the perilous and expensive voyage across the ocean for holy orders." Soon after his return from England he entered upon his ministerial work in Woodbury and lived in the Glebe House for a number of years, including the stormy period of the War. It was at great personal risk to himself and to his family that the small body of clergy were allowed to meet there in "Voluntary Convention" in the spring of 1783.

The third stream of influence spread from West Haven as the mother parish, gained great headway at Yale College and

New Haven in 1722 and resulted in what has been called "the spontaneous blossoming of Episcopacy in central Connecticut." It will be remembered that Johnson, later of Stratford, who had ministered in West Haven, was one of the famous seven young men of the "Dark Day" of 1722. It is interesting to add that in 1748 Johnson wrote of one of the men graduating from Yale that year, "He has lived four years much under my eye. I can truly testify of him that he is a solid, sensible, virtuous youth, and, I doubt not, may in due time do good service." He was writing of Seabury, the future Bishop.

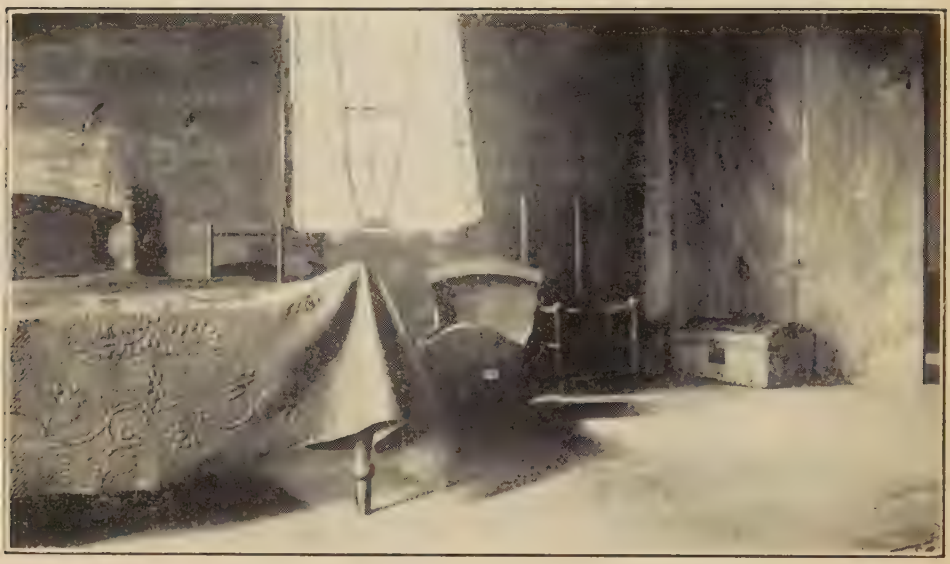
Thus in a marvelous way did the three streams of influence after three quarters of a century converge in the assembly of the clergy in the Glebe House at Woodbury in the spring of 1783.

III.

The long struggle of the War was over, the Independence of the Colonies was secured and acknowledged, but the Church was in desolation. Thick gloom hung over the immediate prospects. The number of the clergy had been reduced to fourteen. It was felt that no time should be lost. Soon after the news of the Treaty of Peace being signed had reached this country ten of the fourteen clergy of Connecticut "met in Woodbury, at the house of Mr. Marshall, far away from the centers of influence and observation," and the meeting was "kept a profound secret, even from their most intimate friends of the laity." Their first thought was to secure the Episcopate. They endeavored to avoid reviving the former opposition to an American Bishop, but their purpose was to complete the organization of the Church, and to provide for its continuity and perpetuity. The formal letter of their Secretary addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury contained this significant passage: "To lay the foundation for a valid and regular Episcopate in America, we earnestly entreat your Grace, that in your archiepiscopal character you will espouse the cause of our sinking Church, and at

Room where Election Occurred

Entrance to Secret Stairs



Second Floor Bed-room

(Notice of broad boards in place of plaster)

Old Fireplace in the Kitchen

this important crisis afford her that relief on which her very existence depends by consecrating a bishop for Connecticut. The person whom we have prevailed upon to offer himself to your Grace for that purpose is the Reverend Doctor Samuel Seabury, who has been the Society's worthy missionary for many years. He was born and educated in Connecticut; he is personally known to us, and we believe him to be every way qualified for the Episcopal office, and for those duties peculiar to it in the present trying and dangerous times."

It is impossible to tell exactly at this late day the names of the ten clergymen who assembled on this memorable occasion and took this action fraught with such far-reaching consequences. "Neither tradition nor history has preserved to us all the names of these true-hearted men. We know, however, from written records, that Marshall, in whose house they met, Jarvis of Middletown, who was their secretary, and Fogg of Brooklyn, whose correspondence tells us what we should not otherwise have known, were among them. Beyond that we are left to conjecture." Bishop Williams names the other seven clergy present as most probably Mansfield of Derby, Hubbard of New Haven, Newton of Ripton, Scovill of Waterbury, Clark of New Milford, Andrews of Wallingford, and Tyler of Norwich. He further says: "We think of them as, on that Festival of the Incarnation, they knelt down in an isolation and a desolation of which we can have no knowledge, to implore the guidance of the Heavenly Mission in their counsels and efforts for that Divine Institution, which, because of the Incarnation, is the Body of the Lord Jesus Christ. We recognize what a venture of faith they were about to make in sending one forth to seek consecration to the Episcopate, that so he might discharge the office of the Bishop in the Church of God to a flock weak and despised, 'scattered and peeled,' and what a greater venture of faith he would make who should go forth on that errand so doubtful and uncertain. We picture to ourselves all the conditions of difficulty and discouragement by which they were

CHURCH DIVINITY SCHOOL of the PACIFIC LIBRARY

surrounded. We remember that the story of succeeding years, familiar as household words to us, was hidden from them in the darkness of an unknown future. We know that they could not even have dreamed of all that was to come out of that day's doings."

The Glebe House, which still stands in simple dignity as it was more than a century ago, is associated with a varied and romantic history and should ever be sacred to every Churchman. It is an "ancient landmark" to be restored and kept, for it is in truth the birthplace of the organized Episcopal Church in the United States. It has been called "An interesting relic and reminder of an important event which was the head of a great epoch in American Ecclesiastical history."

"The election was a spiritual act intended to preserve the existence of the Episcopal Church in America. The office of Bishop was felt by those men as necessary to the Church as the head to the body."

There are no records extant of the proceedings at this conference at Woodbury. No minutes were kept, no roll of the members' names has come down. Every man present had had his mind made up, long before, what was to be done. There was only one thing to do, that was to secure a Bishop. They assembled in the down stairs room of the Glebe house on the left of the main entrance.

Their choice fell finally upon two men, either of whom would be suitable, but neither of whom was present. Their first choice was Dr. Jeremiah Leaming who had been rector of the church at Norwalk. He had been driven away with loss of goods, and friends, and subjected to other hard usage, including imprisonment. He still was suffering from infirmities due to this treatment. He was also an old man and felt that he must decline the office.

Seabury accepted. He was fifty-four years of age and in vigorous health. Born in Connecticut, as we have seen, and graduated at Yale, he had also studied medicine in Edinburgh

and been ordained in England. "He had been rector of Jamaica and of Westchester in New York and served as chaplain of the Provincial Hospital, New York, and chaplain to the King's American Regiment. His eminent abilities and force of character had already made him one of the most prominent and influential clergymen of his day, and he was at once recognized as one having pre-eminently the necessary qualifications for the episcopate."

IV.

Upon his arrival in London the summer following his election Dr. Seabury found many impediments in his path. The Archbishops felt great difficulties in the way of their action, and were embarrased by many considerations, both political and religious.

Parliament felt hampered also. A long correspondence between Seabury and the Connecticut clergy lingered for months while Seabury was waiting in England. He had been more than a year in London trying to have the political obstacles to his consecration removed by a change in the law of the land. Impatient with waiting for the tardy action of those who had taken up his cause, with his funds nearly exhausted, by the advice of friends in England and instructed by the clergy of Connecticut he turned his face towards Scotland. There was in existence what has been called the "Catholic remainder of the Church of Scotland." The Church there was not under the restraint of Parliament. Its Bishops were non-jurors, successors of the English prelates who, at the Revolution of 1688, were deprived of their revenues and dignity by the civil power, because they refused to disown submission to James the Second and swear allegiance to William the Third, Prince of Orange.

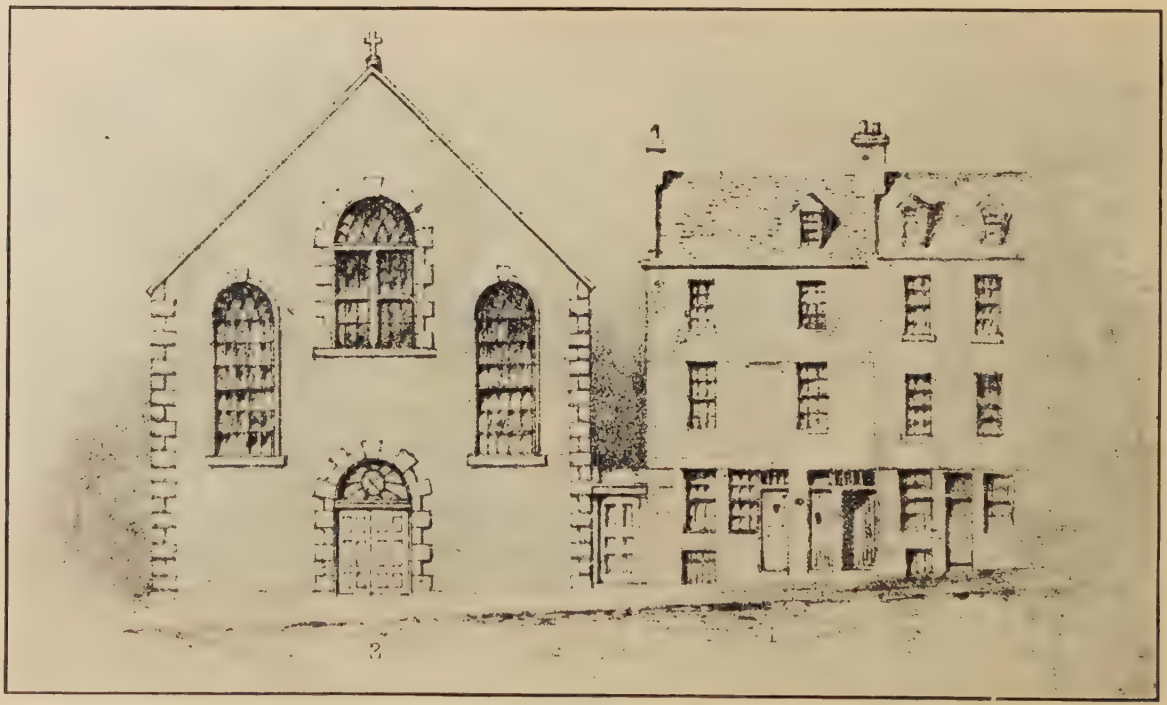
There in Scotland at Aberdeen, on the 14th day of November, 1784, Samuel Seabury was consecrated a Bishop in the Church of God, and came back to be "the apostle of the New World." Finally "the wearisome and wearing delay was over"

and "a free, valid, and purely ecclesiastical Episcopacy passed from the Scottish bishops into the Western World."

The Scottish bishops and other clergymen had intimated that they would hail his coming. They received him gladly. Seabury found in them men of his own spiritual kin. They welcomed him as a man after their own heart. They, like him, were members of a broken and suffering church. They and their Church had a strange similarity to him and his. Both Churches had, through their political situations, been driven to emphasize the divine side of Episcopacy. They both had their homes in the midst of a hostile community.

At this time the repressive laws affecting the Scottish Church had been allowed quietly to become relaxed, and the penalties in the matter of public worship were seldom enforced. They could meet without molestation. Bishop John Skinner possessed a sort of private chapel, made by throwing together the upper rooms of his modest house in Aberdeen (See McConnell's History). With him were associated in this momentous occurence Robert Kilgore, the Primus, and Bishop of Aberdeen, and Arthur Petrie, Bishop of Moray and Ross. Skinner was the Coadjutor of the Primus. "The service was publicly performed, amid a considerable congregation of both clergymen and laymen, all of whom expressed great satisfaction and sympathy."

For two years and a half Seabury was the only Bishop in this New Republic, and all ordinations came from his hands. In 1789 he united with those other Bishops, who had by this time secured consecration in England, in laying hands on Dr. Claggett to be Bishop of Maryland, and through him the succession has come to every one of our bishops since. By the Concordat entered into between the Scottish Bishops and Bishop Seabury and ratified by the clergy of Connecticut the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds were preserved as the sufficient statement of the faith, provision was made for the due observance of the sacraments according to ancient usage, and especially the Scottish Liturgy was accepted as the model for the American



LONGACRE

1. Bishop Skinner's House, Aberdeen, Scotland, where Bishop Seabury was consecrated, November 14, 1784.

2. Chapel adjoining built in 1792 when the Disabilities Act was repealed.

SAMUEL SEABURY, D. D., born 1729, died 1796

First Bishop of Connecticut and First Bishop of the American Church 1784-1796; Presiding Bishop October 2, 1789.

Communion Office which embodies better than any other both Catholic and primitive principles. Of this the greatest of Seabury's successors in Connecticut, Bishop John Williams, declared that in giving the primitive form of Consecration in the Communion Office "Scotland gave us a greater boon than when she gave us the Episcopate."

V.

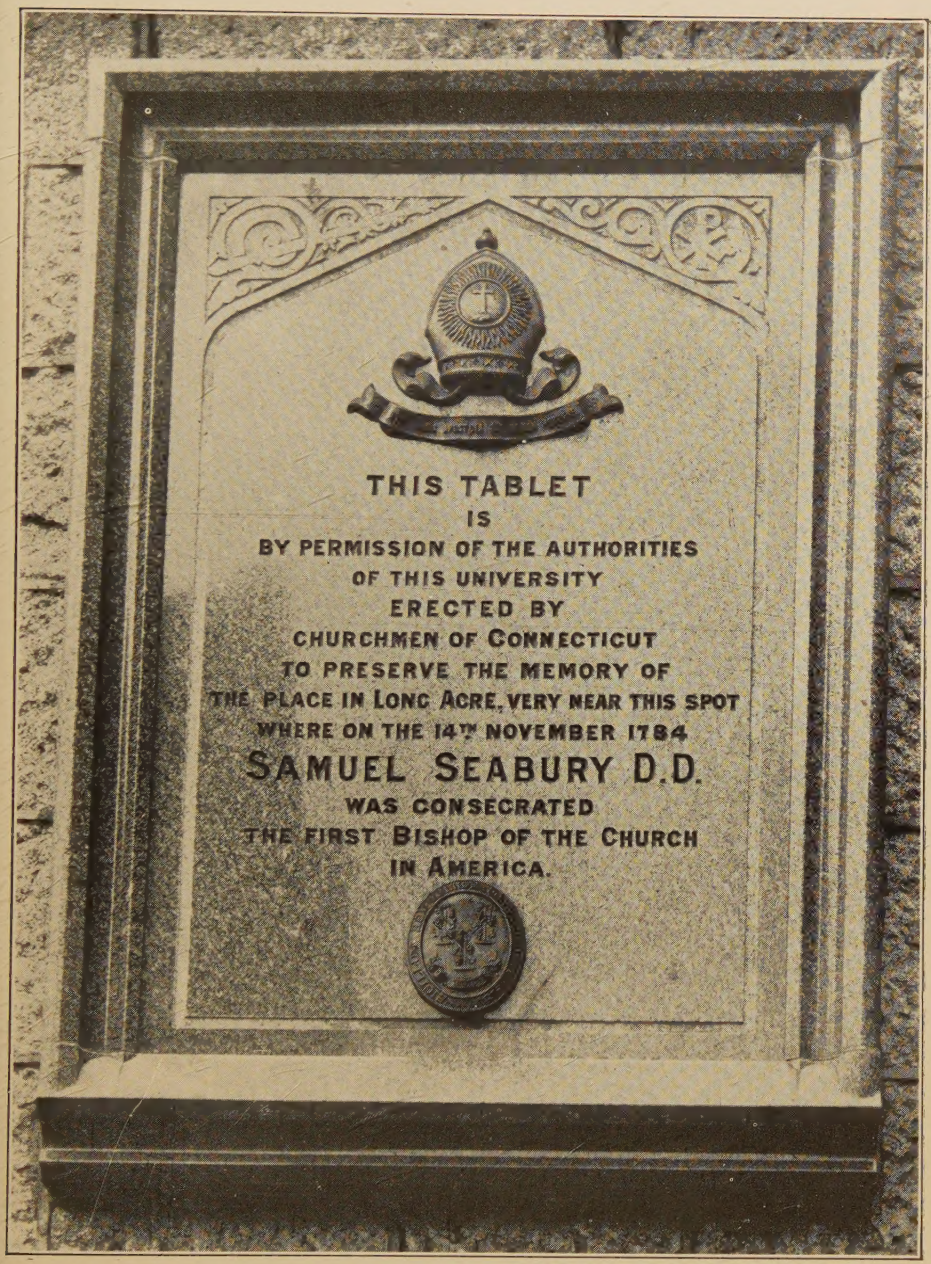
The immediate result of the election and consecration of the first Bishop was the organization of the Church here with a Constitution, Canons, and legislative bodies of her own, meeting in General Convention It is to be remembered that about two-thirds of the signers of the Declaration of Independence were Churchmen and about the same proportion was true of the signers of the Constitution of the United States. Practically the same men who adopted these great State papers adopted also the Constitution of the Episcopal Church in this country.

It has been well said that "Seabury's consecration will always be the poetic incident in American Church history,—and one of its momentous issues was to bring about the very first movement of the Church in Britain from an insular to a Catholic position and to demonstrate the truth that establishment and endowment are not necessary to Church life. For it is to be remembered that not only was there not an Anglican bishop exercising acknowledged jurisdiction in America before Seabury, but there was not an Anglican bishop anywhere outside of the British Isles. Our fathers, sending Seabury for consecration, awakened the English Church to the consciousness that it had a duty to the world in extending its episcopacy beyond the shadow of its cathedrals and palaces. Theirs was a wise and holy enterprise." Their choice of Seabury was the great turning point in the history of the American Episcopal Church.

Since the election of Samuel Seabury in the Glebe House in Woodbury on March 25, 1783, over one hundred and forty years have passed. Connecticut's fourteen clergy have become

over two hundred, and in the whole country, over six thousand; the one Bishop has now become one hundred and fifty, while the succession from Seabury has been passed on to 350. The feeble flock of the early days has multiplied. "The little one has become a thousand." The confirmations last year were over sixty thousand, and the present communicants number over one million, one hundred thousand, while the adherents of baptized members and others are several times this total.

The Episcopal Church exerts an influence in the land far out of proportion to her numbers. Hers is an heritage of soundness in the faith, of sobriety in religious feeling and expression, of orderly worship in her Prayer Book, of apostolic order in her Episcopate, and of championship of religious freedom. Perhaps under the providence of God, through her may be realized true Christian Unity, and meeting her responsibility, which privilege always involves, she may gradually become the harmonizer of the human family.



On the wall of Aberdeen University, Aberdeen, Scotland.

Lines on Seabury Mitre: In Trinity College, Hartford, Conn.

This mitre with its crown of thorn,
  Its cross upon the front:
Not for a proud adorning worn,
  But for the battle's brunt:
This helmet—with Salvation's sign,
  Of one whose shield was faith;
This crown—of him for right divine
  Who battled unto death!

Oh! keep it—till the moth shall wear
  Its comeliness to dust,
Type of crown that's laid up where
  There is nor moth nor rust;
Type of the Lord's commission given
  To this, our Western shore;
The rod of Christ—the keys of heaven,
  Through one, to thousands more.

—A. C. Coxe.

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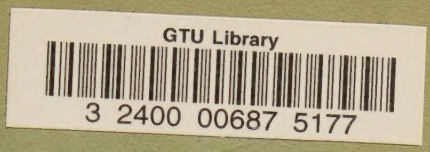

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